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NATIONAL GOPAL RATNA AWARD



- NGRA are the country's highest honours in the **livestock and dairy sector**.
- It was established under the **Rashtriya Gokul Mission in 2021**.
- The "Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM)", was **launched in December 2014**, with a view to conserve and **develop indigenous bovine breeds in a scientific manner**.
- It was constituted by the **Department of Animal Husbandry**, and Dairying under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
- **Objective:** It aims to **encourage excellence among milk-producing farmers**, dairy cooperatives, Milk Producer Companies (MPCs), Dairy Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and Artificial Insemination Technicians (AITs).
- The NGRA will be **conferred in the following categories**:
 - Best Dairy farmer rearing indigenous cattle/buffalo breeds (list of registered breeds Annexed).
 - Best Dairy Cooperative Society (DCS)/ Milk Producer Company (MPC)/Dairy Farmer Producer Organization (FPO).
 - Best Artificial Insemination Technician (AIT).
- There is also a provision of **Special award for the North Eastern Region (NER) and Himalayan States** so as to encourage and boost the dairy development activities in these States/UTs.
- **Cash Prize:** The Award consists of a cash prize of **5 lakh for 1st rank, Rs. 3 lakh for 2nd rank, Rs. 2 lakh for 3rd rank and Rs. 2 lakh for Special Award for North Eastern Region**, along with a Certificate of merit and a memento in the first two categories i.e Best Dairy Farmer and Best DCS/FPO/MPCs.
- In the Best Artificial Insemination Technician (AIT) category, NGA will **consist of a Certificate of merit and a memento**.

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WORLD TRIBAL DAY 2026



Ahead of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, also known as World Tribal Day, a two-day cultural festival showcasing the heritage of indigenous communities was held at Vellalar College for Women, Erode, Tamil Nadu.

- World Tribal Day, also referred to as **International Day of World's Indigenous People**, is observed on **August 9** every year to raise awareness and protect the rights of the world's indigenous population.
- **History:**
 - The **origins** of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People date back to **December 1994**, when the **United Nations General Assembly** designated **9 August** for this annual observance.
 - This date holds symbolic significance as it **marks the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations** of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.
 - This meeting took place in **Geneva in 1982**.
- **World Tribal Day 2026 Theme: "Honouring Indigenous Midwives: Safeguarding Life and Well-being"**

Key Facts:

- **Indigenous peoples** make up less than **6% of the world's population** but represent at least **15% of the extremely poor**.
- They are the **guardians of 28% of the Earth's surface**, which includes **11% of the world's forests**.
- Indigenous territories are home to most of the world's remaining biodiversity.
- Their food systems are incredibly **self-sufficient**, producing **50-80% of their own food and resources**.

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AI AGENTS AND THE NEW FACE OF CYBERSECURITY RISK

Four separate disclosures in recent weeks — involving **OpenAI**, **Anthropic**, **Meta**, and the UK's AI Security Institute (AISI) — have revealed unexpected and unauthorised behaviour by autonomous AI agents during cybersecurity evaluations.

These incidents have reignited debate on whether AI agents represent a new class of cybersecurity threat.

The Recent Disclosures

- **July 21:** OpenAI disclosed that two experimental AI agents exploited vulnerabilities in a closed testing environment and retrieved benchmark answers from Hugging Face in an unintended way.
- **July 27:** Anthropic reported that a review of over 141,000 cybersecurity evaluation runs found three instances where AI models reached the internet from third-party testing environments and gained unauthorised access to systems at three real organisations.
- **August 4:** The UK's AI Security Institute disclosed that AI agents powered by Anthropic's experimental Mythos 5 and OpenAI's flagship GPT-5.6-Sol had engaged in unauthorised actions during cybersecurity evaluations.
- **August 6:** Meta reported a similar issue, where one of its AI models inadvertently breached another company's systems during cybersecurity testing.
- All three companies clarified that these incidents occurred during **controlled evaluations**, not in public deployments.

What Are AI Agents, and Why Do They Need Evaluation?

- Unlike chatbots or Large Language Models (LLMs), which simply respond to prompts, AI agents possess greater autonomy and are designed to pursue goals independently — such as reading and sorting email or analysing financial data.
- This requires them to make decisions, choose their own sequence of actions, and interact with external systems.

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- This autonomy makes their behaviour harder to predict, which is why evaluations simulating real-world scenarios are increasingly important — they allow developers to spot unexpected behaviour and course-correct before deployment.

How AI Agents Pose a Risk?

- Since AI agents can act on a user's behalf — accessing email, browsing the web, writing code, or interacting with other software — errors or manipulation can have **real-world consequences**, not just remain confined to a conversation.
 - A 2025 paper, "AI Agents Under Threat: A Survey of Key Security Challenges and Future Pathways," identifies **four stages** at which risks arise:
 - **Input stage:** Attackers may use **prompt injections** — hidden instructions embedded in web pages or documents — to manipulate what the agent sees or does.
 - **Reasoning stage:** Flaws in planning or decision-making may cause an agent to pursue unintended objectives.
 - **Tool-use stage:** Excessive permissions or compromised software can lead to unintended actions, like sending emails or modifying code.
 - **Interaction stage:** Agents interacting with websites, other software, or other AI agents can spread risks across connected systems, not just a single application.
 - **New Cybersecurity Concern View**
 - Analysts argued that the OpenAI-Hugging Face incident is a "wake-up call" since there was no human in the loop, the action was unintended, and it caused real-world harm.
 - They called for better assessments and regulation of internal deployment, arguing that external evaluators should assess AI systems earlier — during training and internal testing — rather than only after models are completed, since "a lot of the harm can happen earlier."
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EVEREST ENGINE



Astrobase Space Technologies recently unveiled Everest, an 800 kN Full-Flow Staged Combustion rocket engine, as India's private space sector targets reusable, high-cadence orbital launches.

- It is an **800 kN Full-Flow Staged Combustion (FFSC)** rocket engine.
- It was developed by **Astrobase Space Technologies**, a Bengaluru-based Indian space-tech startup.
- It is **India's first privately developed high-thrust FFSC engine**.
- It is designed for **reusable medium-lift launch vehicles**, supporting precision control, faster turnaround, and improved launch economics.
- It is **powered by liquid oxygen and liquid methane**, a combination known as **methalox**, and is designed to produce about **800 kilonewtons of thrust in the vacuum** of space.

What Is Full-Flow Combustion?

- In a **conventional rocket engine**, some of the **hot gases produced during combustion** are used to **power the turbopumps that push fuel and oxidiser into the main combustion chamber**.
- A **full-flow engine** takes this a step further.
 - Both the **fuel and oxygen** are first **partially burned in separate pre-burners**, producing **hot gases that drive their respective pumps** before both flows enter the **main combustion chamber**.
 - This allows the **engine to operate efficiently at very high pressure** while **reducing stress on some components**.
 - The design is widely considered among the most advanced approaches to rocket propulsion.
- **SpaceX** is currently the **only company** to have **flown an FFSC engine** in an orbital rocket.

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KERALA CAN BECOME INDIA'S MODEL AI GOVERNANCE STATE

- Modern governance has become too complex for fragmented information systems and delayed administrative reviews.
- Kerala's strengths, high human development, educated citizens, strong institutions, and decentralised governance, can be sustained only through **administrative modernisation**.
- The State needs to move from retrospective administration to real-time, predictive, and **responsive governance** using data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI).
- This transformation is essential for **institutional credibility**, fiscal discipline, and accountable statecraft.

Sectoral Applications of AI-Enabled Governance

- **Public Health**
 - Real-time monitoring of hospital capacity, medicine inventories, ambulance response, and disease patterns can identify emerging health risks and support rapid, localised interventions.
- **Energy and Power**
 - Integrating electricity generation, distribution losses, subsidies, demand, and rooftop solar data can improve grid stability, financial management, and energy planning.
- **Local Self-Government**
 - Digital dashboards can enable local institutions to monitor project execution, fund utilisation, service delivery, and grievance resolution, combining decentralised decision-making with transparent performance visibility.
- **Social Welfare**
 - Real-time reconciliation of beneficiary databases can identify duplication, exclusion, and inefficient targeting, ensuring that welfare expenditure reaches intended beneficiaries more effectively.
- **Public Finance**

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- Live monitoring of treasury cash flows, committed liabilities, expenditure, and fund utilisation can strengthen fiscal discipline and prevent financial pressures from remaining hidden until periodic reviews.

The Way Forward

- **From Review Meetings to Continuous Accountability**
 - Real-time dashboards can create **continuous, evidence-based accountability**, allowing deviations to be identified and corrected early.
- **State Ownership and Democratic Safeguards**
 - Strong safeguards are essential. Government data must comply with **Indian data-protection laws**, while AI-generated alerts and recommendations should remain auditable through clear decision logs.
 - **Algorithmic transparency** and legislative oversight are necessary to ensure that technological efficiency does not undermine constitutional and democratic accountability.
- **Digital Integration and Prevention of Fiscal Leakage**
 - Integration with existing e-governance infrastructure can securely connect information concerning identity, eligibility, property, subsidies, and transactions.

Kerala as a Model for 21st-Century Governance

- Kerala can demonstrate that **AI and democracy** are complementary rather than contradictory.
 - AI should support, not replace, human judgment and constitutional institutions.
 - By combining **data-driven decision-making**, AI, transparency, privacy protection, and democratic oversight, Kerala can improve welfare delivery, fiscal management, institutional coordination, and crisis preparedness.
 - Its existing strengths provide a strong foundation for becoming a national model of technologically enabled democratic governance.
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PROPOSED NFSA AMENDMENT - DILUTING FOOD SECURITY FOR INDIA'S POOREST

- The proposed amendment to the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 seeks to replace the household-based foodgrain entitlement of 35 kg per month under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) with 7 kg per person per month, subject to a maximum of 35 kg per household.
- Critics argue that this change will significantly **reduce food security** and economic support for millions of India's poorest households, small and vulnerable families.

The Proposed Amendment:

- Existing AAY beneficiaries receive 35 kg of free foodgrains per household every month under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (**PMGKAY**).
- The amendment proposes 7 kg per person per month, capped at 35 kg per household.
- Households with five or more members remain unaffected, while **smaller households** will face a reduction of 20–80% in their foodgrain entitlement.

Background:

- **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY):**
 - It was launched in **2000** during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government, to provide food security to the "poorest of the poor."
 - It initially provided 25 kg per household every month, later increased to 35 kg of foodgrains at subsidised prices; which is now distributed **free** under PMGKAY.
- **Special protection for vulnerable groups:**
 - The Supreme Court, through a series of Right to Food orders, **expanded** AAY coverage by directing inclusion of -
 - Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
 - Households with no earning member, including elderly couples, widows with dependent children, persons with disabilities without family support, and other destitute households.

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- These judicial interventions **strengthened** AAY as a targeted social protection mechanism.

Major Concerns with the Amendment:

- **Sharp reduction in food entitlements:**
 - According to the Household Consumer Expenditure Survey (HCES) 2023-24, **53%** of AAY households have fewer than five members.
 - These households stand to lose 20–80% of their existing allocation. The amendment creates only losers, with no additional beneficiaries.
- **Severe impact on single women:**
 - The worst affected group would be women living alone, particularly widows. Nearly **one million** women fall in this category. Around 85% are widows, and 74% are illiterate.
 - Their monthly entitlement would decline from 35 kg to 7 kg, an 80% reduction, worsening food insecurity and economic vulnerability.
- **Foodgrain as an economic asset:** For many destitute households -
 - Foodgrains are not merely for consumption.
 - Surplus grains are often **sold or exchanged** for essential items like vegetables, medicines, or cooking fuel.
 - Thus, AAY functions as a social income support programme, not merely a nutrition scheme.

Conclusion:

- The debate over the proposed NFSA amendment underscores a broader policy challenge - **balancing** fiscal efficiency with the constitutional commitment to social justice.
- While rationalising welfare schemes is important, reforms affecting the most vulnerable sections must preserve the protective intent of targeted food security programmes.
- This rationalisation drive must ensure that administrative efficiency does not come at the cost of basic human dignity.